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ABSTRACT

The "right to read" as a world and United States goal necessitates the maximum development of each student's reading ability, and this requires individual diagnosis and an eclectic approach to individual instruction. Among the skills which must continue to be developed beyond the primary grades are word-attack skills, vocabulary and concept development (including emphasis on abstract and figurative terms and contextual analysis), silent and oral reading skills, study skills through practice with good content-type materials, and comprehension and critical reading skills. In all of this instruction there must be an ongoing evaluation of each student's skill development, and measures should be taken to correct deficiencies as they occur. References are given. (DE)

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READING INSTRUCTION FOR NINE-TWELVE YEAR OLDS

Section A-3, 4-5:15 P.M., Friday, August 7, 1970

Problems Facing Educators

In August 1968, the Second World Congress on Reading met in Copenhagen, Denmark. The theme of the congress was: READING: A HUMAN RIGHT AND A HUMAN PROBLEM. Dr. Eve Malmquist of the National School of Educational Research in Sweden gave the opening address. His topic was: "Reading Ability: A Human Right and A Human Problem". Dr. Malmquist emphasized in his talk that each individual should be given the opportunity to develop his reading ability to its highest potential. He said, "this is a right". He stated that sixty-five percent (65%) of the world's population is below

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functional literacy (fourth grade level). Only twenty-four per cent (24%) of the people of India are literate. Only five per cent (5%) in Ethiopia are literate. Illiteracy is on the increase due to rapid population growth. Illiteracy has grown to be an acute problem of the world today.

Dr. Malmquist noted that we spend much time and money on conquering disease in the world. We need to conquer ignorance. He pointed out that we have two tasks before us -- (1) to eliminate illiteracy, and (2) to raise the level of functional literacy to at least the ninth grade level.

Malmquist continued that we need an intensified world-wide literacy campaign. Fifteen times as much money is spent for defense in the world today (1968) than is needed for a literacy campaign.

Less than a year ago, our former United States Commissioner of Education, Dr. James E. Allen, Jr., set a Target for the 70's - The Right To Read. He delivered a stirring address on this topic in September, 1969 to the National Association of State Boards of Education.

Allen said".....from the beginning of our Nation, the importance of education has been recognized. Education has come to mean many things and to encompass a wide range of information and experiences, but certainly it must still include, as it did in the beginning, the ability to read."

Those who do not gain this ability in the course of their early education lack a skill necessary to all other

areas of learning and are being denied a fundamental educational right - the right to read." (1)

Allen referred to a variety of statistical information accumulated by the U.S. Office of Education regarding reading deficiencies in the country:

> "One out of every four students nationwide has significant reading deficiencies.
> In large city school systems up to half of the students read below expectation.
> There are more than three million illiterates in our adult population.
> About half of the unemployed youth in New York City, ages 16-21, are functionally illiterate.
> Three-quarters of the juvenile offenders in New York City are two or more years retarded in reading.
> In a recent U.S. Armed Forces program called Project 100,000, 68.2 per cent of the young men fell below grade seven in reading and academic ability."

Dr. Allen proclaimed his belief: "that we should immediately set for ourselves the goal of assuring that by the end of the 1970's the right to read shall be a reality for all -- that no one shall be leaving our schools without the skill and the desire necessary to read to the full limits of his capability."

Dr. Allen called for a national commitment to and involvement in the achievement of the "right to read" goal.(1)

These two men have set very high goals and very necessary goals for all of us. In realizing these goals, we are faced with many interrelated problems. Among these are:

(1) the many rapid changes of our world;
(2) the pressures resulting from world competition;
(3) the school population explosion;
(4) the number of disadvantaged people in the many parts of the world;
(5) the many new reading programs and materials coming before us and making decisions concerning their value in our instructional programs;
(6) and others too numerous to list.

Expectations

If the goals set by these people are to be attained, we have to teach reading to the nine to twelve year olds and do it better than we have ever done it before. This also means that reading instruction must continue beyond the twelve year old level.

When one talks or writes about reading instruction for the nine to twelve year olds, there are certain expectations that come to mind. We expect that the child has progressed through the normal stages of growth and child development up to this point. We expect that the child has had good effective teachers with excellent pre-service and

inservice training especially in reading methodology. We expect the teachers to have an understanding of the nature of the reading process. We expect that the child or student, before reaching this age, has had a good basic primary reading program with no major gaps. We expect and accept that learning to read to the fullest limits of one's capabilities is a long-term developmental process.

Program

The nine to twelve year olds need an eclectic approach to reading as does any other age group younger or older. The eclectic approach involves selecting methods or approaches and materials based on the individual differences and needs of the learner. The eclectic approach is the selection and orderly combination of compatible features from diverse sources. (2) It is the combination of valid elements from various theories into a harmonious instructional program.

The reading program has to be a part of the total language arts program. The language arts program is composed of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In order to read effectively, he should have developed skills in listening, speaking, and writing.

As at any instructional level, the student in this age group needs individual evaluation. Individual evaluation or diagnosis is used to determine the student's capacity and his present level of reading skill achievement. Evaluation

of reading achievement will include: (1) sight word vocabulary; (2) word attack skills; (3) level of silent reading; (4) meaning vocabulary and concepts; (5) ability to profit from listening situations including oral directions; (6) oral reading skills; (7) facility in finding information, use of reference materials; (8) work habits and attitudes; and (9) rate at which curricular materials can be read.(3)

After evaluating or diagnosing the students reading, a flexible reading program has to be planned to meet the individual differences and needs as indicated by the evaluation. The reading instructional program must be well planned, organized, and systematic. In planning this program, careful consideration must be given to the reading of all curricular materials such as science, social studies, mathematics and health materials as well as literary type materials.

Word-Attack Skills

Word-attack skills must be reviewed and extended in the intermediate grades. (3)

Too often, it is assumed that because a child has reached the intermediate grades or the age group being discussed, that his word-attack skills have been proficiently developed in the lower grades. The analysis of his reading evaluation or diagnosis will show his word-attack abilities. Provide instruction in those skills that are deficient. Provide him with individual instruction or with a group that has the same needs or deficiencies. It is not necessary to

teach the entire class these word-attack techniques if many have already developed these skills well.

Heilman has pointed out that experience indicates that lack of ability in phonic analysis will be a major stumbling block for many pupils at this level. Since most of the emphasis on teaching phonics falls in the primary grades, the curricular materials at the intermediate level many not contain enough practice for those pupils who are deficient in this skill. Prefixes and suffixes should be dealt with extensively at this level from the standpoint of both structural and meaningful changes produced. Syllabication is a dictionary skill which should be stressed. (3)

Vocabulary and Concept Development

Much attention must be given to vocabulary development and the development of concepts. By the time pupils reach the intermediate grades difficult vocabulary and concepts are introduced in the various content materials at a rate that causes much frustration among many pupils.

Meaningful reading at this level depends upon the acquisition and continual extension of concepts. One of the major reading problems is coping with the gap which tends to develop between the child's store of meanings and the demands made by the curricular materials he is expected to read. (3)

In these grades, a great number of idiomatic expressions, abstract terms, figurative terms, and new meanings for words learned earlier appear in the materials to be read.

Contextual analysis continues to be important to the student as an aid in word recognition and vocabulary development. When the reader does not know or recognize the word, context may give him enough clues of the word meaning to permit comprehension.

At this age level, reading vocabulary starts to exceed listening vocabulary. Contextual analysis becomes more important in the development of meaning vocabulary and good reading comprehension.

Silent and Oral Reading

Most reading at this level is silent reading. Good word attack skills and vocabulary and concept development are basic for effective silent reading. Depending upon the nature of the material, silent reading needs to be purposeful and guided.

Much has been written about the pros and cons of oral reading. Oral reading can be of great value or of little value in the program depending on its use.

Oral reading is a necessary part in diagnosing a pupil's skills and weaknesses. Hearing and observing a child read orally gives important clues to his competence in sight vocabulary, word attack skills, use of context, and use of punctuation.

Other oral reading should be a part of the program and must have meaningful functional use. The values of oral reading can be found in many class situations. Regardless of

the situation, oral reading can be justified only when the purposes are logical, the goals educationally sound, and the preparation adequate to the occasion. (3)

Oral reading can be an ego-building experience or a most frustrating experience for the reader. There must be purpose for the oral reading. The reader must be prepared with the material to be read aloud. Oral reading should not be overused so that it loses its effectiveness. Oral reading must be meaningful, not artificial or mechanical.

Oral reading must be part of the program in preparation for demands put upon students in higher grades and in adult out-of-school situations. Instruction in oral reading must be considered in light of the purposes for which it is used, the materials used, and how it is incorporated into the total program.

Study Skills

Study skills are basic to the reading of content curricular type materials. These skills must be developed through practice with good content type materials. These skills include (1) previewing materials; (2) skimming and scanning; (3) reading graphic materials; (4) locating information; (5) evaluating material; (6) organizing, summarizing, and reporting; (7) retaining the essentials of what is read; and (8) adjusting rate to purpose or flexible reading.

Previewing, as defined by Spache: ".....is an organized, rapid coverage of reading materials, such as a

chapter in a book, a report, a newspaper article, or other source. In practice, it involves reading some or all of the following before deciding how or whether to read the entire selection: title, headings, subheadings, summary or introductory statements, illustrative and graphic materials, and opening and closing sentences of each paragraph. (4)

Previewing means being able to answer such questions as: "What information may be obtained from this material? Is this information significant to the reader's purposes? Should the entire selection be read? What are the main ideas presented?" (4)

Previewing must have purpose as a technique for the students, otherwise it has little value.

Skimming involves not only recognizing main ideas but also some of the supporting details. Scanning involves locating quickly specific information in printed materials without reading all words or entire pages. Examples of scanning are locating key items in an index, a telephone directory, and other sources. As Spache has indicated, thse three techniques help pupils develop flexibility in rate and skill in adapting the form of reading to the reader's purpose. (4)

In order for the student to read content material effectively, he must be able to read and interpret the various types of graphic materials encountered.

Instruction in the reading of graphic materials will include map reading, graphs (bar graphs, line graphs, etc.),

charts, diagrams, and tables.

In the development of reading skills at this age level, one single textbook or series of texts are not adequate to encompass all the needed information on a particular topic. Pupils must develop skills in locating information. They must know how to use the parts of a book: the title page; the table of contents; the preface; the index; the glossary; the appendix; the copyright page; the lists of tables, maps, and illustrations; the chapter headings; and the graphic and the pictorial helps.

The student must learn to use the various reference materials of the library. At this level he learns to use the various types of reference books, the card catalogue, the Dewey Decimal System; the Almanacs and Yearbooks; the picture and clipping files; and Guides to Periodical Literature.

With the development of locational skills, he must learn to evaluate what has been found. Does this material serve his purpose? Does it answer his questions on a topic? Evaluation of material is critical reading of this material.

Heilman states that: "Interpreting and evaluating material is probably as close a synonym for critical reading as can be found. Illustration of the analytical abilities involved include:

1. Knowing what the author has said
2. Grasping the validity of statements and knowing when and how to check validity with other sources
3. Differentiating between fact and opinion

4. Noting when inferences are being drawn and drawing them when they are not stated
5. Detecting author bias as well as inaccuracies which might not be traceable to bias
6. Understanding one's own biases as these relate to what is being read
7. Taking into consideration an author's use of allusions, satire, humor, irony and the like
8. Developing some criteria for judging an author's competency in the area in which he writes". (3)

The program must include the development of organization and reporting skills. Note taking and outlining are a basic to this part of the program.

Techniques must be presented for retention of material read or studied. Such techniques as SQ3R could be used here.

Developing flexibility and the adjustment of rate depending on purpose for reading are important. The student must learn to realize early that not all material is read at the same rate or for the same purpose.

Comprehension and Critical Reading

Throughout all this reading skill development, comprehension is the key. While focusing on the many facets of the reading program and developing comprehension, critical reading of the various types of materials presented to the student must be developed to the highest level possible.

Critical reading does not come automatically with the development of other reading skills. It has to be carefully planned and practiced. Critical reading is a high level form of comprehension. Critical reading invloves judgment and evaluation.

The program for the nine to twelve year olds or the intermediate program is a many faceted program. It means developing the skills already discussed. It means using basal reader type books, content textbooks, literary materials, news in the form of periodicals and daily newspapers, various types of reference materials, and teacher developed materials. Reading interests of the students must be considered in the selection of these materials. An appreciation for good literature and well written materials must be encouraged.

No attempt has been made in this paper to discuss the implementation of this program. There are many excellent sources that explain grouping, individualized programs, departmentalization, dual progress, team teaching, continuous program, nongradedness and others.

In all of this work, there must be constant evaluation of each student's skill development and measures taken to correct deficiencies as they occur.

The development of reading skills with the nine- to twelve year olds is as crucial as the beginning reading development in the primary years. The program must be systematic and organized.

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